

Introduction

by Define-Sanity

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Summary: Number 1 on the 100 themes challenge (and mostly written to break the heart of a very special lady 3) It can be thought of as a less than happy take on the ending of the second movie. Astrid placed her palm flat against the helmet at her hip, stroking the leather fondly. "Let me tell you a story." She began. "Its about a boy -My boy- and without him, there would be no dragons left

Introduction

"Are you sure this place is safe?"

The woman nodded, her brows furrowed in deep thought. She never thought she'd return to this place, yet as she watched the once familiar island grow nearer as the waves carried them forward, she felt a strange twisting in her stomach. Not one to show her emotions, the woman only rubbed her cheek against her left shoulder and twisted her tongue so as to capture a lock of strawberry blond hair between her chapped lips. It was a rather disgusting habit she had developed, but the rhythmic chewing and sucking of her own wild mane of hair seemed to do well to take her mind away from the rather dark place it had wandered.

It had been almost two years since she had returned to her home; or rather, what was left of it. Even from the distance they were at, Astrid could make out the vague silhouettes of burnt out trees and the skeletons of what had once been their docks. The woman tried to focus on fond childhood memories of watching the busy fishing boats bringing in their haul, and the excitement of their mighty Berk warriors returning from raids. However, just as a smile had begun to play on her lips, a husky voice from behind her cut her memories short and brought her harshly back to reality.

"Look, I'm just saying that if I were to choose a place to hide out, it wouldn't be at a dump like this-"

"We're not hiding." Her voice was sharp and cold like the edge of a blade. The hair she had been chewing on clung to her cheek, and she was quick to wipe it off before turning to face the man who challenged her.

Astrid was by no means a large woman. What muscle she had was lean and firm, and hidden by the thick furs that covered her body. But the way how she carried herself- chin high and shoulders back with her one good arm inches away from the axe she carried on her back, she might as well have been 10 feet tall and as strong as the dragons they were attempting to protect. Her blue eyes cold like ice bore into the lanky man before her, and any arguments he may have had instantly died on his tongue.

"What we are doing, Amund," She continued, her words brutally slow and deliberate. "Is setting up our shelter, and preparing our training camp. From there, we build our army."

Amund licked his lips and took a careful step backward. He dared not break eye contact as he nodded slowly. He rose his worn hands ever so slightly, as if their leader were a wild animal preparing to strike. For all he knew, she may as well have been. "Alright." He agreed, breathing a sigh of relief when he noticed the woman's shoulders ease some. "Allow me to rephrase. What I mean to say is, if I were to choose a place to camp.."

"Which you are not."

"Which I am not," He echoed warily. "I would choose a place wellâ€¦ A little less obvious."

Astrid's expression became unreadable as she stared down the sailor in front of her. While her hand was no longer reaching for her axe, it instead was lowered to her side, and began to idly trace the thick stitching on the leather helmet that was strapped to her hip. The woman sighed heavily, her chest heaving with the action as she turned on her heel and looked back out at the island looming ahead of them.

A tense silence passed between them that was only filled by the sounds of the waves as they crashed against the ship, and the banter and bickering of the crew on the deck. When Astrid did speak again, her voice was no less stern, but it had noticeably softened which for some reason unsettled the man even more than her anger.

"They fancy themselves lightning. They don't like to strike the same place twice, and since it's pretty obvious they've left their mark, it makes the ideal hiding place. Plus I know this island like the back of my hand, and since so much time has passed, no doubt the wild life is returning, so we'll have plenty of resources if we work for it."

"Rightâ€¦" The man said cautiously. "And where exactly is this?" He asked, genuinely curious.

Another silence passed between them, although this time it was not anywhere near as long as the last, nor as tense. Astrid licked her chapped lips, and took long, slow breath. "This is where it all started."

"I'm sorry?"

Astrid placed her palm flat against the helmet at her hip, stroking the leather fondly. "Let me tell you a story." She began. "Its about a boy -My boy- and without him, there would be no dragons left at all."

By now the man's full attention was had, curiosity gripping him with both hands firmly.

As she spoke the woman turned and faced him, with the smallest of smiles straining on her cheeks and crinkling a scar that stretched across the bridge of her nose. From above her, she heard the loud bellow of her Deadly Nadder as she flapped her wings excitedly from her perch atop the ships mast. No doubt the pale blue dragon recognized her home even after spending such a time away from it. Astrid glanced up at her best friend and companion, Stormfly, before she raised her one hand to touch the empty space on her shoulder where her right arm once was.

"His name was Hiccup. And this was our Home. This was Berk."

End
file.